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ABSTRACT

Along with its companion teacher's guide, this student study text teaches writing skills needed to pass the New York Regents Competency Test (RCT) in Writing, using the computer as an instrument of instruction. The guide is arranged in three sections that match the tasks required on the RCT Writing Test: (1) The Business Letter; (2) The Report; and (3) The Composition. Each section of the guide contains an introduction, instructions, a demonstration task, practice assignments, and samples. (SR)

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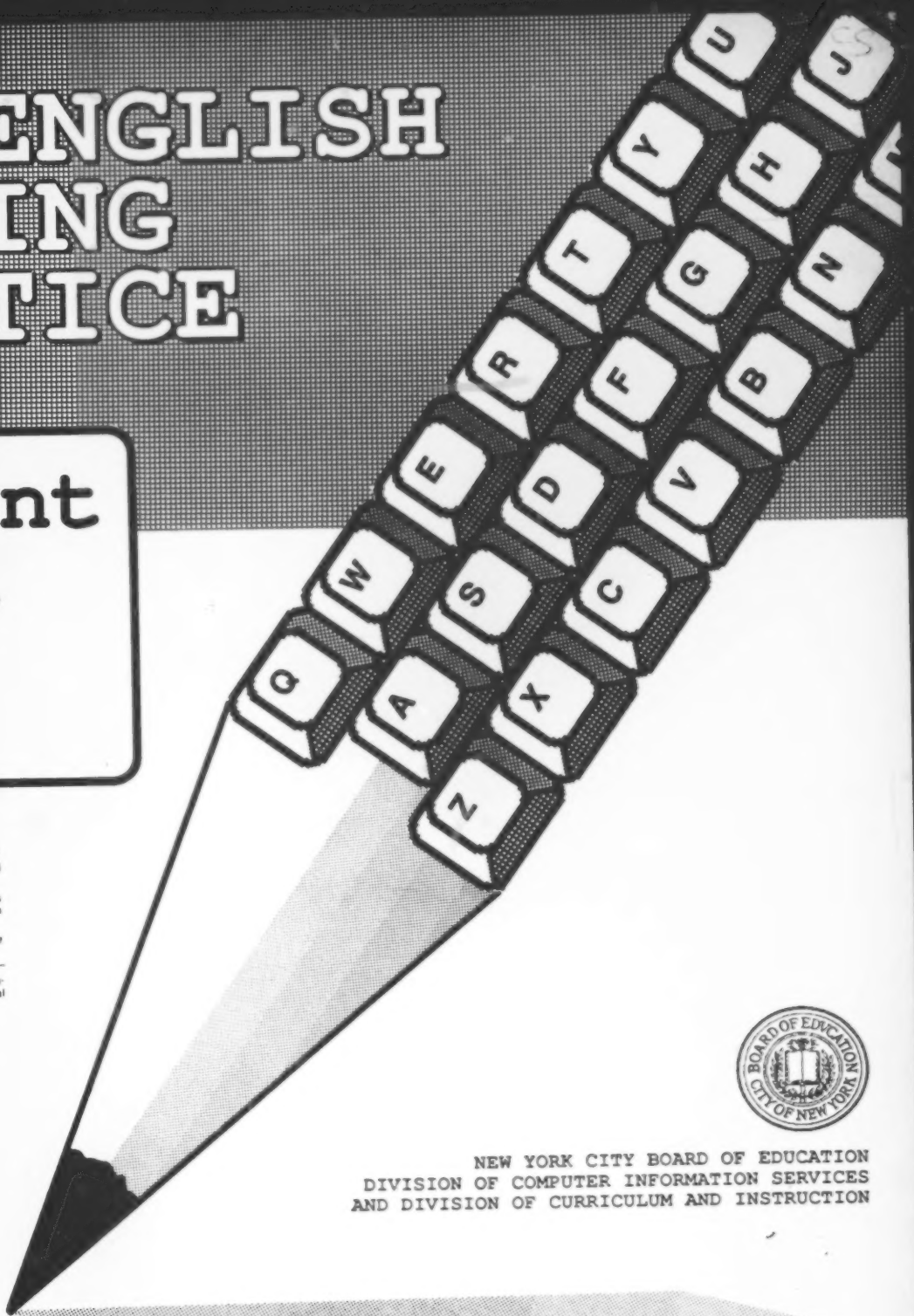
RCT ENGLISH WRITING PRACTICE

Student Study Text



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CS212191

- Report
- Business Letter
- Composition

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CS

RCT English

Writing Practice

STUDENT STUDY TEXT

CS&I2191

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Notes on the Use of This Text

Dear Student,

Helping you to be successful on the Regents Competency Test in Writing is the first purpose of this manual. You will be required to use the word processor extensively in these lessons because it is an effective and enjoyable device to improve your skills as a writer.

You will surely find, as you complete the several tasks required of you under THE BUSINESS LETTER, THE REPORT and THE COMPOSITION lessons, that the word processor will be of value to you as you organize your thoughts and correct and present your written work. Writers, journalists, business people and students are among the vast numbers of persons who depend upon the word processor for their writing tasks at work and in private life.

Following your teacher's instructions in using this manual will not only help you to prepare for this test, but will also make a lasting contribution to the development of your writing abilities.

This book is arranged in three sections that match the tasks that will be required of you under the R.C.T. - Writing. They are:

The Business Letter - The Report - The Composition

Each section contains:

* an introduction - describes the kind of writing covered by each part of the test.
* instructions - specific information about each type of writing and advice on how to analyze and carry out the task.
* a demonstration task - a step-by-step example of how a writing task is carried out.
* practice assignments - writing tasks that resemble those you will meet on the R.C.T.
* samples - examples of how each assignment might have been answered.

While your teacher will guide you through all sections of this manual, it is expected that you will use it independently also for study and review. Good luck!

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THE BUSINESS LETTER

Writing a Business Letter

(Understanding Its Purpose and Appropriate Use)

Introduction:

The business letter is a device used to communicate formally with other people about important matters. The business letter usually follows a standardized format by which the sender can relate details and information in a way that the reader can readily follow and understand. This information could be about a complaint regarding certain merchandise purchased, a confirmation of a scheduled appointment or just about any business-related concern.

It is imperative for both the reader and sender that only accurate information be transmitted. To ensure this, the business letter follows a format that requires the sender to include all significant information. This format includes the 7 Parts of a Business Letter and the 3 Components of the Body of the Business Letter.

As in a friendly letter, a business letter contains a return address (heading), greeting, body, closing, date, and signature. The business letter also contains an inside address which appears directly above the greeting. (See sample business letter format.)

While the greeting of a friendly letter is followed by a comma, the greeting of a business letter is usually followed by a colon. If the business letter is typewritten, the sender's name appears twice at the closing: once in type and once as the sender's signature.

On the pages that follow, lessons have been devised to guide you in using the proper business letter format as well as in the actual writing of business letters. The subsequent assignments are provided to reinforce the skills you have just been introduced to. Follow these lessons page by page since they were created on a developmental model and the assignments become increasingly complex.

The Seven (7) Parts of a Business Letter

Explanation:

There is a certain format for business letters to follow that is generally accepted in the business community. People use business letters to respond to customers, order parts, make complaints, and, generally, ask for a specific response to their needs. This format includes the seven (7) major parts of the business letter:

Major Parts of the Business Letter

Part	Sample	Function	Location
1) Return Address	234 Main St. Lima, OH. 29323	Identifies sender's address.	Upper right hand corner
2) Today's Date	July 8, 1987	Lists the date on which letter was written	Below the return address
3) Inside Address	490 Wart Ave. Forg, NY 10311	States the letter's destination	Left column, below date
4) Greeting	Dear Madam: Dear Sir: Dear Ms. Smith: Dear Mr. Jones:	Greets the person to whom letter is addressed	Just below inside address
5) Body	(the message)	Contains the contents or message of letter	Under the greeting
6) Closing	Sincerely, Yours Truly,	Statement or words ending your letter	At the end of body of letter
7) Signature and name	Fred Netfly	Identifies and verifies sender	Below closing

RCT Business Letter: DEMONSTRATION Task

(Letter Concerning the Runtopper Walkman Video)

Directions:

Write a business letter about the situation described below. Read all the information carefully before you start to write.

The Situation:

You bought a Runtopper walkman radio for $68.00 on May 15, 19__ from the Erika Video, Inc. store located at 2344 Dexter Ave., Southport, NJ 20442. The walkman is under a year's warranty. It worked for 6 weeks and then, abruptly, the volume control switch stopped moving. You cannot use the radio. It is now July 3, 19__. You want a refund or a new Runtopper.

Pretend your name is Thomas Horta and you live at 18 Fremont Place, in Brooklyn, NY 12203.

IN YOUR LETTER BE SURE TO:

- Explain the situation.
- Explain what you want Erika Video, Inc. to do.
- Give complete and accurate information.
- Use an acceptable business letter form.

Blank Format of Business Letter

(To be used with DEMONSTRATION Task)

Instructions:
Using the RCT Business Letter DEMONSTRATION Task, place all the information in its proper location on the Blank Business Letter Format found below. In the BODY section, list facts that you will include in the three paragraphs.

Return Address > _____
_____
_____

Date > _____

_____
_____ < Inside Address
_____

_____ < Greeting

1) Statement of the Problem (list details to include in body)

A) _____

B) _____

C) _____

2) Important Related Information

A) _____

B) _____

C) _____

D) _____

3) Proposed Solution

A) _____

B) _____

C) _____

Closing > _____

Signature > _____
Name > _____

Business Letter Format

(To Be Used With DEMONSTRATION Task)

(The sender's street and #, City, State, ZIP) (Return Address) \ / 18 Freemont Pl.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 12203

(Today's Date) > July 3, 19__

Erika Video, Inc.
2344 Dexter Ave.
Southport, NJ 20442

/ \ (Inside Address) (letter destination)

Dear Manager: < (Greeting) (Write the person's name if you know it.) (Use a colon after name)

```
BBBBB
B    B
BBBBBB
B    B
BBBBB
```

```
 00000
0     0
0     0
0     0
 00000
```

```
DDDDDD
D     D
D     D
D     D
DDDDDD
```

Include in the BODY:

--- State Problem
--- Provide Information
--- Propose Solution

```
Y     Y
 Y   Y
  Y Y
   Y
   Y
```

(Closing) > Sincerely,

(Signature) >

(Name) > Thomas Horta,

The Three Components of the Body of a Business Letter

1) Statement of the Problem

Clearly explain to the intended reader the nature of the problem. For example, it may concern a defective product, incompatible schedule, rude treatment by an employee, etc. Describe to the reader exactly what is wrong or how you were wronged. Include in this first paragraph the make, model and other identifying characteristics of the product upon which the complaint is based, if that is the case.

2) Important Related Information

Here the sender provides the related information that the reader will need in order to solve the problem. Explain the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW of the situation. If you are dissatisfied with a faulty product, for example, explain where and when you purchased it, what you may have been told or given at the time of the purchase, e.g., warranties, and how it does not suit your needs.

You want the reader to understand in no uncertain terms why you have a complaint.

3) Proposed Solution

After you have supplied the necessary information and stated the problem, the sender proposes a workable solution which would correct the problem and leave him/her satisfied. The sender clearly states the solution in precise terms. For example, the writer might state: (1) "Send me a full refund.", (2) "Repair the broken switch because it is under warranty." (3) "Reschedule my appointment to any Wednesday in March."

The sender should not assume that the reader will know how to solve the problem. The letter must communicate very clearly what action the reader must take to satisfy the sender.

Note: At the end of this paragraph which proposes a solution, close the body of your letter politely by thanking the reader for the anticipated assistance with your problem. Remember, no one likes rudeness. You will increase your chances of getting your problem solved by being polite, firm and to the point.

Analyzing the Body of the Business Letter

(To be used with DEMONSTRATION Task)

(Letter Concerning Runtopper Walkman Radio)

Note: Before you begin to write your business letter, prepare a brief outline that organizes what you want to say and how you will say it. Your message should appear in the body of the business letter and generally can be stated within three paragraphs if it is a relatively simple problem. The following is a listing of information according to the paragraph in which it should be given as well as a sample of how that paragraph might be written.

1) Statement of the Problem
   - Runtopper walkman radio does not work.
   - Volume control does not move.
   - Sender is returning the Runtopper

SAMPLE First paragraph

I am sending you back the Runtopper walkman radio that I purchased from Erika Video, Inc. since the volume control does not move and the radio cannot be used.

2) Important Related Information
   - Paid $68.00 for Runtopper on May 15, 19__
   - It is now July 4, 19__
   - Runtopper had a one-year warranty
   - Worked for 6 weeks, volume control abruptly stopped working.

SAMPLE Second paragraph

On May 15, 19__ I purchased the Runtopper walkman from your store for $68.00 with the understanding that it would have a one-year warranty. The walkman worked for about 6 weeks and abruptly the volume control stopped moving. It is now July 4, 19__ and the walkman still is under your store's warranty.

3) Proposed Solution
   - Send me my refund (or)
   - Send me another Runtopper

SAMPLE Third paragraph

Kindly send me another Runtopper walkman or refund my $68.00 purchase price. I look forward to your response.

Sample Answer to DEMONSTRATION Task

(The Runtopper Walkman Radio Business Letter)

(RETURN ADDRESS)------- 18 Fremont Pl.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 12203

(DATE) -------- July 3, 19__

Erika Video Inc.
2344 Dexter Ave. ----- (INSIDE ADDRESS)
Southport, NJ 20442

Dear Manager: ----- (GREETING)

I am sending you back the Runtopper walkman radio that I purchased from Erika Video, since the volume control does not move and the radio cannot be used. ---------- State Problem

On May 15, 19__ I purchased the Runtopper walkman from your store for $68.00 with the understanding that it would have a one-year warranty. The walkman worked for about 6 weeks and, abruptly, the volume control stopped moving. It is now July 3, 19__ and the walkman still is under your store's warranty. ---------- Provide Information

Kindly send me another Runtopper Walkman or refund my $68.00 purchase price. I look forward to your response.
---------- Propose Solution

(CLOSING) ----- Sincerely,

(SIGNATURE)-----

(NAME)---------- Thomas Horta

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #1

(Letter Concerning ABC Software)

Directions:

Write a business letter about the situation described below. Read all the information carefully before you start to write. Complete the Blank Format of Business Letter page as a rough draft before writing your final copy.

The Situation:

You bought a computer software program titled: Write My ABCs from Springville Software. Inc., which has its offices at 807 Bigridge Dr., St. Paul, MN 55435. You wanted the Apple IIe version of this program. You received the IBM version by mistake, apparently because the case the disk came in was marked Apple IIe. You want to exchange the IBM for the Apple IIe version.

Complete this letter by using your own return address.

IN YOUR LETTER BE SURE TO:

- Explain the situation.
- Explain what you want Springville Software, Inc. to do.
- Give complete and accurate information.
- Use an acceptable business letter format.

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #1

(Sample Letter Concerning ABC Software)

83 Secord Ave.
Irongate, VA 40308

July 7, 19__

Springville Software, Inc.
807 Bigridge Dr.
St. Paul, MN 55435

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed you will find the Write My ABCs software program that I recently purchased from your company. I purchased this program thinking it was for the Apple IIe computer but it is actually for an IBM computer.

The disk is made to be used with an IBM computer although the case that the program came in was marked for the Apple IIe computer. I purchased the program in June 19__.

This is a minor problem that can be corrected by sending me the Write My ABCs Apple IIe version of this program. I look forward to receiving the Apple IIe version.

Sincerely,

Betsy South

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #2

(Requesting a refund of money)

Directions:

Write a business letter about the situation described below. Read all the information carefully before you start to write. Complete the Blank Format of Business Letter page as a rough draft before writing your final copy.

The Situation:

You ordered a set of floppy disks for your Apple IIe personal computer back in October 19__ from Reliable Software Inc. of Riverdale, California. You received your set of 10 disks, type A545 for the Apple IIe, on January 3, 19__ only to find that several of the disks are damaged to the point at which you cannot record programs on them. You have little confidence in this firm's product, so you want a complete refund of the $22.50 you paid for the 10 disks.

Your Task: Write a business letter about this situation to:

Reliable Software, Inc.
145 Paxton Ave.
Riverdale, California 29304

Complete this letter by using your own return address.

IN YOUR LETTER BE SURE TO:

- Explain the situation.
- Explain what you want Reliable Software to do.
- Give complete and accurate information.
- Use an acceptable business letter format.

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #2

(Sample Letter Requesting a Refund of Money)

234 Scrupol St.
Bronx, NY 13302

January 3, 19__

Reliable Software, Inc.
145 Paxton Ave.
Riverdale, California 29304

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to you in reference to a box of type A545 disks for the Apple IIe computer that I purchased from your company. I received these disks only to find that they were damaged; therefore I am returning these disks to you.

In October 19__ I purchased this set of 10 disks from Reliable Software, Inc. for $22.50. When I received the package I found that several disks were damaged so severely that I could not save programs on them.

In view of the condition of these products, I am entitled to a full and prompt refund of my $22.50. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to my refund.

Sincerely,

Evan Roberts

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #3

(Invitation Letter to the Mayor)

Directions:

Write a business letter about the situation described below. Read all the information carefully before you start to write. Complete the Blank Format of Business Letter page as a rough draft before writing your final copy.

Situation:

You have been assigned by the student council of Westerly High School to invite the mayor to your school to give a speech on March 2, 19__. March 2nd is an important day in your school because the school was founded 50 years before on that day. On January 15, 19__ one of his aides called you to say that the mayor cannot make that speech at your school. He advises you to make alternative plans. The student council wants you to ask the mayor to reconsider his appearance because of the importance of this day to the school or send a replacement speaker.

Your Task:

Write a polite but firm letter to the mayor explaining the situation and what the student council wants. Give accurate information and use the Westerly High School return address:

The mayor's address is:

The Honorable _____, Mayor
City Hall
New York, New York 10005

Be sure to use:

- proper business letter form
- accurate information
- correct grammar
- explain what you want the mayor to do

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #3

(Sample Invitation Letter to Mayor)

Westerly High School
434 Raxville Pl.
Brooklyn, NY 56603

January 15, 19__

The Honorable _____, Mayor
New York City
City Hall
New York, New York 12394

Dear Mayor _____:

On behalf of the student council of Westerly High School, I am writing to you again to ask you to reconsider our request to have you speak at our school on March 2, 19__. One of your aides called our school today to say that you would not be able to attend.

The Student Council of Westerly High School would like you to speak at our school on March 2, 19__ because this is the 50th anniversary of the founding of Westerly High. This is an important day to the many people who have attended Westerly, and we want to make it a special occasion in every way.

Please reconsider your decision, Mayor _____, and attend our 50th Anniversary celebration. If you cannot make it, please send a replacement speaker from your office. I look forward to your favorable reply.

Yours Truly,

Henry Goldfinch, Student
Westerly H.S. Student Council

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #4

(Requesting Tickets to A Concert)

Directions:

Write a business letter about the situation described below. Read all the information carefully before you start to write. Write on a separate sheet of paper.

The Situation:

You ordered and paid for four (4) tickets to the Allen and the Optionals rock and roll concert. The tickets you requested are for the 8:00 P.M. show on August 30, 19__. This is one of your favorite bands and they are performing several concerts at the Madison Square Garden at the end of August, 19__. The TICKETRON office that distributes the tickets sent you four (4) tickets for the 5:30 P.M. show on August 28, 19__. You cannot go that date and want the tickets you ordered. You will need to send back the August 28 tickets.

Your Task:

Write a business letter to Ticketron indicating that you are returning the wrong tickets you were sent and requesting the ones you originally ordered.

Today is July 17, 19__ and the TICKETRON office is located at 356 West 68th St., New York, New York 12944.

Complete this address by using your own return address.

IN YOUR LETTER BE SURE TO:

- Explain the situation.
- Explain what you want TICKETRON to do.
- Give complete and accurate information.
- Use an acceptable business letter format.

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #4

(Sample Letter Requesting Tickets to a Concert)

180 Ridgeway St.
Staten Island, NY 10302

July 17, 19__.

Ticketron
356 West 68th St.
New York, New York 12944

Dear Sirs:

I am returning to you four (4) tickets to the August 28th Allen and the Optionals concert because they are for the wrong concert date.

I ordered and paid for four (4) tickets to the 8:00 P.M. concert of August 30, 19__ at Madison Square Garden. Instead, your office sent me four (4) concert tickets to the 5:30 P.M. show of August 28, 19__. Allen and the Optionals are my favorite band and I don't want to miss this concert.

Please exchange these tickets for me and send me the four (4) tickets to the 8:00 P.M. concert of August 30, 19__ of Allen and the Optionals. I look forward to receiving my tickets and thank you for youristance.

Sincerely,

Milt Fredina

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #5

(Correction of Utilities Bills)

Directions:

Write a business letter about the situation described below. Read all the information carefully before you start to write. Write on a separate sheet of paper.

The Situation:

The utilities bill your family has just received, which covers the payment period March 21 to May 20, 19___, contains charges of $470.50 for the use of gas and electricity, which is about double the amount you had paid in the past. No member of your family can account for this unusual bill, as there has been no use made of the air conditioner, and gas has been used only for ordinary cooking. Your family is concerned that service may be cut off if the proper payment is not made.

Your Tasks:

Write a business letter about this situation to :

Accounting Department
Metropolitan Edison
20 Cadman Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Complete this letter by using your own return address and account No. 262248.

IN YOUR LETTER BE SURE TO :

- Explain the situation.
- Urge the company not to take any action until the matter is investigated and corrected.
- Provide as much relevant background information as you can, and request a corrected bill.
- Use an acceptable business letter format.

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #5

(Sample Letter Requesting Corrected Utilities Bill)

99 Marcy Street
Brooklyn, NY 11203

June 8, 19__

Accounting Department
Metropolitan Edison
20 Cadman Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Re: Account No. 262248

Ladies/Gentlemen:

My family has asked that I write to you to call your attention to an obvious error in our March 21 to May 20, 19__ utilities bill. The amount of this bill, which is $470.50, is at least twice as much as any we had ever paid for the use of gas and electricity in our apartment for this season of the year. We are therefore not paying this bill at this time.

If you will check our records you will note that our utilities bill is rarely more than $250.00 for a two-month payment period, except for the air conditioning season when it might increase by no more than a few dollars. Since we have not used our air conditioner, and gas was used for ordinary cooking, we must conclude that there has been an error in reading our meter.

We therefore request that you investigate this matter and send us a corrected bill, which we will pay promptly. In the meantime we trust that there will be no interruption in our utilities service.

Sincerely yours,
Bernard Pilaski

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #6

(Fair Prices for G.O. Store)

Directions:

Write a business letter about the situation described below. Read all the information carefully before you start to write. Write on a separate sheet of paper.

The Situation:

You have been assigned by your school's G.O. Committee to boost fund-raising for club activities by obtaining greater profit margins on the items sold in the G.O. store without increasing costs to students. Based upon what committee members have learned from other high schools, they believe that the main supplier, Advance School Products, is not giving your school the most favorable price on items. They determined that such favorites as emblem T-shirts and cardigans are overpriced by $.50 and $1.50 respectively. Furthermore, discounts for payments within 30 days are not given to the school.

Your Task:

Write a business letter to Advance School Products, at 40 Paramus Street Fort Lee, NJ 20101, explaining the committee's concerns and insistence upon fair prices and terms, as well as credits for past overcharges. Complete this letter by using your own high school return address. The date is Dec 12, 19__.

IN YOUR LETTER BE SURE TO:

- Explain the situation.
- Provide relevant background information.
- Indicate how the company can satisfy the G.O. committee's requests.
- Use a proper business letter format.

RCT Business Letter - Practice Assignment #6

(Sample Letter: Fair price for G.O. Store)

Atlantic High School
20 Rockaway Avenue
Queens, NY 21113

December 12, 19___

Advance School Product
40 Paramus Street
Fort Lee, NJ 20101

Ladies/Gentlemen:

Under the instructions of our school's G.O. committee, I am writing to you concerning the prices and terms for your items that we sell in our G.O. store. Our committee has reason to believe that they are in excess of what you charge other schools. As a result, our profits are too small and we cannot adequately support our club program.

Members of our committee have visited other high schools in our borough and have found, for example, that we pay an average of $.50 more for emblem T-shirts and $1.50 for cardigans, our two best sellers, than they do. In addition, we do not receive their discount for payment within 30 days. Our records show that we have lost considerable money because of this.

We must therefore insist that you carefully review your billing policies for our school, to be certain that we will be given the best possible prices and terms, and credit our account for any previous excessive payments. We look forward to hearing from you regarding both revised price lists and adjustments for past charges.

Your truly
Weidna Berns

THE REPORT

Instructions for Writing a Report

(Using the RCT Format)

Introduction:

The RCT Writing Exam has three sections, one of which is the requirement to write a short report based on a series of facts provided to you. Typically, a situation is described that requires you to act as a local newspaper reporter or to complete a report for a class; you have taken down notes from an interview and now you must compile them into a coherent report. The RCT Report exam is generally presented in this format. To help you prepare for this task, a set of suggestions for writing clear and accurate reports follows:

Steps to Follow

A) Read over the situation and facts thoroughly. Do you understand what they are about? List the main ideas or general categories or sub-topics that are being presented.

B) Group the fragmented sentences into 3 or 4 "main idea" categories. The first category (written in paragraph form) will be an introductory paragraph. The introductory paragraph will tell the reader the "who," "what," "where," "when," "how" and "why" of the report. The reader should have a clear understanding of who is being interviewed or what is being reported. After the introduction, all the other information should be included in the other 3 to 4 other paragraphs, each of which is organized around a different category or other main idea. Start each paragraph with a topic sentence that will give the reader an idea of what the paragraph will be about.

C) Once you have listed the main ideas and grouped the sentences under these main ideas, start writing your rough draft.

D) Edit your rough draft and make sure you included all the information that was listed in the report task before writing your final copy.

Other paragraphs might be concerned with sub-topics such as:

- Advantages: of a product, activity or profession
- Advice: the person being interviewed might offer some practical advice to the readers
- Drawbacks: of a product, activity, or profession
- Biography: brief description of the events and accomplishments of the person interviewed
- Events: major happenings described in several sentences in the report task

RCT DEMONSTRATION Report Task

(Interview with Michael Dannon, Dental Student)

Your Task:

You are completing a project for Career Development Day to be held at your school next month. Your assignment is to interview Michael Dannon, a dental student at New York University for a report on what it is like to be a dental student.

You interviewed Mr. Dannon and the notes you took from your interview are listed below. Organize these notes to prepare you to write a report for publication. To help you do this, rearrange your notes, before you start to write your first draft, into several main idea categories.

Cafeteria at New York University, interview takes place 3:30, Wednesday afternoon on July 16, 1987

Tired and exhausted, studied all day for final

Assigned to 4 patients each term; do fillings, crowns, bridges, extracts

While at school, attend lectures, study and see patients, practice and more practice

"Just because you do it right once, that doesn't mean you know it,." says Michael Dannon.

Meet with professors often regarding patients

Much advice for the high school students considering dentistry

Study hard, do well in chemistry and biology

Get good grades, apply for top colleges

Attend orthodontal school after graduation

Future looks promising

Work at internship in dental clinic next year at Staten Island Hospital

Analyzing the Report Information

(Based on Demonstration Report Task)

Instructions:

Based on your reading of the Sample RCT Demonstration Report Task, answer the following questions which test your comprehension of the facts in the Report Task.

1) Who is being interviewed? _____

2) What does the interviewee (person being interviewed) do? _____

_____

3) Where did the interview take place? _____

_____

4) Why was the interviewee tired? _____

_____

5) How many patients does this dental student see each term? _____

_____

6) What is Michael Dannon's direct quote? _____

_____

7) What advice does Michael offer to prospective dental students? _____

_____

8) What does Michael plan on doing after graduation? _____

_____

9) Why does Michael meet with his professors? _____

_____

10) Where does Michael Dannon go to school? _____

Identifying the Main Ideas of a Report

(Using Demonstration Report Task - Interview with Michael Dannon)

Instructions:

Group the information from the interview notes into at least 4 main idea categories. Your first paragraph should be an introductory one. It should include information about the purpose of the interview, identification and background of the interviewee (if applicable) and where and when the subject of the report occurred. Other paragraphs might be concerned with such topics as benefits, advice, drawbacks, biographical information or description of a major event.

1st Paragraph

_____

_____

_____

_____

2nd Paragraph

_____

_____

_____

_____

3rd Paragraph

_____

_____

_____

_____

4th Paragraph

_____

_____

_____

_____

Categorizing the Main Ideas of a Report

(Interview with Michael Dannon, Dental Student)

1) Information for the Introductory Paragraph:

You are completing a project for Career Development Day to be held at your school next month. Your assignment is to interview Michael Dannon, a dental student at New York University.

Cafeteria at New York University, interview takes place

3:30, Wednesday afternoon on July 16, 1987

Tired and exhausted, studied all day for final

2) Information on what Michael Dannon does at school:

Assigned to 4 patients each term, do fillings, crowns, bridges, extracts

While at school, attend lectures, study and see patients, practice and more practice

"Just because you do it right once, that doesn't mean you know it." says Michael Dannon.

Meet with professors often regarding patients

3) Information on Advice that Michael has to offer:

Much advice for the high school students considering denistry

Study hard, do well in chemistry and biology

Get good grades, apply for top colleges

4) Information on Michael Dannon's future:

Attend orthodontal school after graduation from NYU

Future looks promising

Work at internship in dental clinic next year at Staten Island Hospital

Writing Complete Sentences From Sentence Fragments

(Interview with Michael Dannon, Dental Student)

NOTE: Your objective in this part of the report task is to convert the fragmented sentences of your notes into complete sentences, which have a subject and predicate. When you do this, make sure you do not change the meaning or facts of the sentence. Add "starter" words and phrases as well as joining words where necessary. Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that will give the reader an idea of what that paragraph will deal with. The remaining sentences of the paragraph provide the necessary details about that topic. For the instruction part found on all the RCT Task sheets, change the pronouns from 2nd person to 1st person where appropriate in order to explain to the reader why you are writing this report.

(Text from the instructions part of the RCT Task)

You are completing a project for Career Development Day to be held at your school next month. Your assignment is to interview Michael Dannon, a dental student at New York University. You are to write a report based on your interview about what it is like to be a dental student.

(Revised version with different pronouns) (Changes in boldface)

For my Career Development Day project, to be held at our school next month, I interviewed Michael Dannon, a dental student at New York University.

(Sentence fragments to sentences. Some sentences are combined)

F = Sentence Fragment CS = Completed Sentence

F) Cafeteria at New York University, interview takes place
F) 3:30, Wednesday afternoon on July 16, 1987
CS) Our interview took place in the cafeteria at New York University at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday July 16, 1987.

F) Tired and exhausted, studied all day for final
CS) Michael Dannon was tired and exhausted from studying all day for a final exam he was going to take.

F) Assigned to 4 patients each term, do fillings, crowns, bridges, extracts
CS) Michael is assigned to 4 patients each term and he is required to do fillings, crowns, bridges and extracts.

F) While at school, attend lectures, study and see patients, practice and more practice
CS) While at school, Michael attends lectures, studies and sees patients. He always has to practice and practice what he has learned.

F) "Just because you do it right once, that doesn't mean you know it." says Michael Dannon.
CS) Michael Dannon says, "Just because you do it right once, that does not mean you know it."

F) Meet with professors often regarding patients
CS) He also has to meet often with professors about his patients.

F) Much advice for the high school student considering dentistry
F) Study hard, do well in chemistry and biology
CS) Michael Dannon had lots of advice for high school students considering dentistry as a career. Mike suggested studying hard and doing especially well in chemistry and biology.

F) Get good grades, apply for top colleges
CS) Also, students should get good grades and apply for top colleges.

F) Attend orthodontal school after graduation from NYU
F) Future looks promising
CS) The future looks promising for Michael Dannon. He plans to attend orthodontal school after graduation.

F) Work at internship in dental clinic next year at Staten Island Hospital
CS) Mike also will work at an internship in the dental clinic next year at Staten Island Hospital.

Grouping Sentences Into Paragraphs

Sample Final Report

Interview With Michael Dannon, Dental Student

By Andrew Sambooka

For my Career Development Day project, to be held at our school next month, I interviewed Michael Dannon, a dental student at New York University. Our interview took place in the cafeteria at New York University at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 16, 1987. Michael Dannon was tired and exhausted from studying all day for a final exam he was going to take.

While at school, Michael attends lectures, studies and sees patients. He always has to practice and practice what he has learned. Michael is assigned to 4 patients each term and he is required to do fillings, crowns, bridges and extracts. Michael Dannon says, "Just because you do it right once, that does not mean you know it." He also has to meet often with professors about his patients.

Michael Dannon had lots of advice for high school students considering dentistry as a career. Mike suggested studying hard and doing especially well in chemistry and biology. He also stated that students should get good grades and apply for top colleges.

The future looks promising for Michael Dannon. He plans to attend orthodontal school after graduation. Mike also will work at an internship in the dental clinic next year at Staten Island Hospital.

RCT Report - Practice Assignment #1

Your Task:

You are the fashion reporter for your high school newspaper and have just been granted an interview with Sara Vogel, Director of Fashion Design, at Western Wear, Inc., a leading fashion company.

You interviewed Ms. Vogel and the notes you took from your interview are listed below. Organize and develop these notes to create a report suitable for publication. To help you to organize and write your report, rearrange the notes before writing your first draft. Do not omit any information in the notes.

Was held July 18, 8:30 p.m. over pizza

Interview at Western Wear sales office on Wyoming St.
in New York City

Fashions in today's world

Cordial and friendly, down to earth

Clothes change constantly from year to year

Fashion designs repeat themselves every 30 years-Women
generally more interested in fashion

Future fashions are planned a year in advance

Hands-on experience, the best teacher

Advice for interested young people

"Don't limit yourself to one area of fashion."

Very competitive industry, go to a good school

Western Wear, mostly for the sports minded

Design, manufacture, distribute and sell

Made In The USA label on all our clothes

Practice Report #1 - Sample Report

Interview With Sara Vogel

By Linda Donaldsby, Fashion Reporter

I was recently granted an interview for our school newspaper with Ms. Sara Vogel, Director of Fashion Design at Western Wear, Inc. Western Wear is a leading design company in America. Our interview took place on June 18, 19__ at 8:30 p.m., at Ms. Vogel's office on Wyoming St. in New York City. We talked over pizza and our discussion was about fashions in today's world. I found Ms. Vogel to be very friendly and down-to-earth.

Ms. Vogel provided me with quite a bit of background information about the fashion world. She explained that clothes are changing constantly from year to year. She pointed out also that fashion designs repeat themselves every 30 years or so, and that women are generally more interested in fashion then men. To keep up with the trends, companies plan fashions a year in advance.

While we talked, Ms. Vogel offered some advice for interested young people. She said, "Do not limit yourself to one area of fashion." She explained that the industry was very competitive and that a good school would be of help. Also, she advised, young people should look for hands-on experience, since that is the best teacher.

At the end of our interview, Ms. Vogel talked a little about Western Wear, a company mostly for the sports minded. Western Wear designs, manufactures, distributes and sells sporting clothes, all of which carry the Made In The USA label.

RCT Report - Practice Assignment #2

Your Task:

You are the sports reporter for your high school newspaper. It is two weeks after the New Jersey Gargantuas have won their first Superbowl, and you have been granted a personal interview with Tom Finns, quarterback for the Gargantuas.

You interviewed him and the notes you took from your interview are listed below. Organize and develop these notes to create a report suitable for publication. To help you organize and write your report, rearrange your notes before you start to write your first draft. Do not omit any information in these notes.

February 16th, Monday 9:30 A.M.

Pressroom, Gargantua Stadium - Catchall Complex

Tom was relaxed and casually dressed

Lasted 35 minutes

Won the Superbowl MVP award

Most successful season Gargantuas ever had

Confidence of players, crucial to team's success

Never quit spirit, 100% effort from everyone

Many reasons for great year

Academic State Coll., N.Y.

1979 arrived at Gargantuas, watched mostly first year

Many injuries, thought I was jinxed

"I never got any respect. Now no one should doubt my ability."

Contract offers, too many, razor blade commercials

Future plans, relax and win it next year

Best game ever played

Play golf, tennis, and racquetball in off-season

Practice Report #2 - Sample Report

Interview With Tom Finns

As the sports reporter of my high school newspaper, I had the opportunity to interview Tom Finns, quarterback for the New Jersey Gargantuas. Our interview occurred on February 16, 19__, two weeks after the Gargantuas won their first Superbowl. The interview took place in the pressroom of Gargantua Stadium of the Catchall Complex. Tom was relaxed and casually dressed for our 35-minute interview.

Tom explained why he thought the Gargantuas had their most successful year ever. There were many reasons for this great year, such as the "never quit" spirit and the 100% effort from all the players. According to Tom, the confidence of players was also crucial to the team's success. One of the results of this great year was that Tom won the Superbowl MVP (Most Valuable Player) award for having played an outstanding game. For Tom, this was the best game he had ever played.

During our talk, I found out a lot about Tom Finns and how he became what he is today. Tom is a graduate of Academic State College, which is in New York. In 19__ he arrived at the Gargantuas and spent most of his time watching others play. He had so many injuries over the years that he thought he was jinxed. "I never got any respect. Now no one should doubt my ability," Tom said as he referred to the Superbowl victory of the Gargantuas.

Tom has quite a few plans for the future. To start with, he wants to relax and then win the Superbowl next year. Tom has received quite a few contract offers, too many, in fact. One of these offers is to sell razor blades! Tom also intends to play golf, tennis and racquetball in the off-season.

RCT Report - Practice Assignment #3

Your Task:

For your high school computer literacy class, you are assigned write a report on your visit to the annual New York City Computer Conference that was held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. This all-day affair took place on Saturday, May 18, 19__.

You toured the different displays, saw demonstrations and heard various guest speakers. Below are the notes you took from your visit. From these notes write a report based on your experience at the conference.

Main convention hall, lasted from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Many booths and displays set up

All different computer manufacturers represented

Guest speaker, Ms. Marlene Johnson of Apple Computer Clubs

Explained membership, purpose, function of clubs

"With Apple computers, students will invent the future."

All types of displays

Many booths, each demonstrating something different from the next

Over 10,000 clubs internationally

New Model 30 from IBM there, tried it out

Word processing programs, accounting software, cartoon maker programs were explained, demonstrated

Called Video Imaging

Near end of conference, special feature using video camera

Video and computer combined to digitize your picture

Took only 38 seconds, fantastic

Practice Report #3 - Sample Report

My Visit To The Computer Fair

By Bernice Raxton

For my computer literacy class, I was assigned to write a report on my visit to the annual New York City Computer Conference. This event was held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center on Saturday, May 18, 19__. I toured the different displays, saw demonstrations and heard various guest speakers. The convention was in the main hall and lasted from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There were many booths and displays set up. Many different computer manufacturers were represented at the convention.

At the convention, Ms. Marlene Johnson of Apple Computer Clubs was guest speaker. She explained the membership duties, purpose and functions of Apple Computer Clubs. According to Ms. Johnson, "With Apple computers, students will invent the future." There are currently over 10,000 Apple Computer Clubs internationally.

There were all types of displays and booths, each demonstrating something different from the others. The new IBM Model 30 was there, and I had the opportunity to use it. Visitors were also able to see demonstrations of word processing programs, accounting software and cartoon maker programs.

Near the end of the conference there was a special feature demonstration using a video camera called Video Imaging. This technique combined the use of the video and computer to digitize a picture of oneself. The entire process took only 38 seconds to complete and was really fantastic.

RCT Report - Practice Assignment #4

The Situation:

As an officer of your school's Community Service Club, you have been asked to begin arrangements for next year's after-school volunteers at the Bricon Senior Residence. You have a meeting with Claire Nobar, Assistant Director, who supervises school volunteers. You are to submit a report on this meeting for next month's issue of the Club's newsletter.

The notes you took of the meeting are listed below. Organize and develop them into a report suitable for publication. Do not omit any information in the notes.

- Arrived 4:00 p.m. for appointment
- Waiting in lobby some residents wandering aimlessly
- Staff friendly seemed rushed
- Ms. Nobar delayed by filling in for absent attendant
- Discussion in business office, 4:15
- Need for volunteers for companionship, stimulation of elderly
- Count on to attend regularly, be friendly,
- Not nurses or attendants, board games, conversation, wheelchair
- Cheerful, patient with slower speech, motions, some depression, only contact with outside
- Tour included recreation, dining, unoccupied residents' rooms, veranda; all clean and show effort
- Several residents just stare into space
- Farewell appreciation party picture of previous club group

Practice Report #4 - Sample Report

Meeting With Clara Nobar

By Eli Mosin

To begin arrangements for our community service club's continued volunteer service next year at the Bricon Senior Residence, I met with Ms. Clara Nobar in the business office of the Residence on the afternoon of May 21, 19__.

Ms. Nobar had been delayed for a few minutes because an attendant was absent and she had to take over some of his chores. I had noted, while waiting in the lobby, how rushed some of the friendly staff seemed to be.

She started our discussion about the volunteers by pointing out the importance in providing companionship and stimulation for the elderly residents. The need for this became clear to me while I waited in the lobby and during the tour I later took. I saw several of them walking about aimlessly or just staring into space. Ms. Nobar stated that for some of the residents, the young volunteers are their only contact with the outside world.

What was expected of the volunteers was also made clear by her. They are counted on to attend regularly and to be friendly with all of the residents. They are not expected to act as nurses or attendants, they help mainly by conversing with the residents, playing board games and walking with some residents or pushing others in their wheelchairs. Volunteers are expected to show cheerfulness and patience with the elderly, who often have slower speech and other motions and sometimes suffer depression.

Ms. Nobar then took me on a tour of the Residence. She showed me the recreation room, veranda, dining room. All of the facilities were clean. It was obvious that the staff tried hard.

At the end of the tour Ms. Nobar showed me a group picture of last year's volunteers at their farewell party. It was evident that our club volunteers are appreciated.

RCT Report - Practice Assignment #5

The Situation

Your Italian pen pal since middle school years has written to you that she and some classmates will be coming to New York next year as high school exchange students. She asks you to find out from other exchange students here how they might begin now to prepare.

The notes you took of your conversation with several students are listed below. Organize them into a clear and informative letter. Include all notes in your letter.

- Practical English - friends, TV, American newspapers, culture
- Many students and faculty eager to help, tutoring, social services
- Informal dress styles
- Family life, rules, sharing
- Beginning homesickness, problems with studies, prejudice, drugs
- Clothing for all seasons
- It's not like in the movies
- American textbooks
- Most fears are baseless
- Your upbringing and own family traditions
- Travel guide books on local laws, driving, drinking, recreation

Practice Report #5 - Sample Report

Letter to Future Exchange Student

Dear Marie,

The exchange students I talked with provided much information that will be useful to you and your friends to prepare now for your year's study in New York. They understand that you have fears but assure you that most fears are baseless. Life in America is not the way you see it in the movies. Once you arrive, they said, you will find many students and members of the faculty eager to help you. They will also lead you to the tutoring and social services available in the school and community.

One of the first things you must think about is life with the family that has invited you to their home. They will want you to be part of it, and so you must live by their rules and share in housekeeping responsibilities. You must also live by the standard of your own upbringing and maintain respect for your own family's traditions.

They advise you to prepare for your schooling as well as your social life by practicing your English. Speaking English with your friends and listening to English television broadcasts will improve your speech. Reading American newspapers will not only be good practice for using textbooks but will also give you good background for understanding American cultural life. For the same reasons, it would be a good idea to do some advance studying in American textbooks.

It was also suggested that you read some travel guidebooks. They can provide helpful information about local customs and laws, especially regarding requirements for driving and drinking alcoholic beverages before age 21, which may be different from the laws in your country. They will also acquaint you with the vast cultural and recreational resources of the New York area.

It is a good idea to plan now for the clothing you will need. American students dress less formally for school than many foreign students are accustomed to. Keep in mind also that you will need clothing that is suitable for all kinds of weather that you will find in New York's four seasons.

Naturally, they said, there are problems that you may have to face. Aside from homesickness at the beginning, there could be difficulties with studies, people who may show prejudice or those who try to tempt you with drugs. It would be a good idea for you and your friends to share your ideas now on how you might deal with such problems.

All of the exchange students I talked with are certain that you will have a wonderful experience here.

Sincerely,

THE COMPOSITION

Composition Format for the RCT

Introduction:

For writing a composition there are several formats one could use. The format described below is useful for writing short persuasive essays of about 200 words. It can easily be adapted to any topic.

Composition Format (an outline)

In your RCT Composition there will be about 4 major paragraphs, each with a specific purpose within the composition. They are as follows:

Paragraph One (an introduction)

In this first paragraph you want to accomplish the following:
a) Start your composition
b) Introduce yourself (as a student, subscriber, friend etc.)
c) Identify what topic, issue or problem you are writing about
d) Clearly state your opinion concerning the topic or issue.

Paragraph Two

In Paragraph Two you want to state clearly and explain your FIRST major reason in support of your opinion. After that you provide additional evidence and examples which serve to strengthen this important reason. All of the points made in Paragraph Two should be related. If they are not, start another paragraph. Providing real life or fictional examples may also help you make your point. Citing statistics to support your reasons will also lend credibility to your opinion.

Paragraph Three

In Paragraph Three, you explain your SECOND major reason in support of the opinion expressed in the introductory paragraph. The format for this paragraph will be the same as that of the second one.

Paragraph Four

In the last paragraph you conclude your composition. The following might be included in this final paragraph:

a) a phrase or sentence that refers to this paragraph as the conclusion
b) brief summary of the major points made in the composition
c) an expression of thanks for attention to your opinion
d) an offer to provide additional information or an invitation for the reader to respond on this subject.
e) an expression of good wishes for carrying out the matter under discussion

RCT DEMONSTRATION Composition Task - Theme

Situation:

The principal of your school is concerned about the lack of school spirit at the high school you attend. The principal feels strongly that if more students were involved in school-related projects teams and clubs, they would feel more a part of the school. His idea would make it mandatory that every student participate in at least one team, club or school project during the school year.

Students could join a sports team, club, or work on a project, such as the Homecoming Committee. The choice of activity would be the student's, but this new requirement would have to be met in order to graduate.

Your Task

Decide on whether you agree or disagree with your principal's proposal. Write a composition of about 200 words persuading your principal to agree with your opinion. Give two reasons that support your opinion, and fully explain each reason.

In your composition make sure you:

1) clearly state your opinion of the principal's plan
2) provide two reasons supporting your opinion
3) fully explain each of your two reasons
4) organize what you write

RCT DEMONSTRATION Composition Task - Creating Paragraphs

(Letter to the Principal regarding school activities)

Introduction

In this lesson the objective is to create approximately four paragraphs which will comprise your persuasive essay. You may end up writing more than four paragraphs, which is perfectly acceptable. Your primary concern is to include convincing reasons in the body of your persuasive essay.

Getting Started

Jot down a list of reasons in support of the opinion you have decided to defend. From this list, select two (2) main reasons that you will emphasize. These reasons are the most important ones you can think of. Other, less important reasons, along with examples and other evidence, may be used within the paragraphs to support these major points.

Follow the SAMPLE RCT Demonstration Composition Task.

Your Opinion: The principal's plan to require everyone to join a club will not work.

Reasons:
1) students see it as forced upon them
2) people resent new rules, in general, especially if rules are questionable in some manner
3) new members would have to join under pressure, which would result in teams and clubs performing poorly
4) teams and clubs function best when they are made up of volunteers
5) it is better not to change a system that is already working properly
6) many students have conflicting after-school obligations

Note: Before you write your paragraph, determine which reasons apply to each "main" reason. Put these fragmented sentences in sequence and add words that will create complete sentences and join them.

Sample of Completed Paragraph (based on the reasons above)

First of all, I feel strongly that the plan will fail because students will view this as something that is "forced" on them by the school. Students, like other people, object to having new demands placed on them for reasons that are questionable. Requiring everyone to be on a club or team would mean that these new members would be joining under pressure. This would result in poor performance by the clubs and teams or school projects because some of their members are only half-interested in the activity to begin with. Clubs and teams function best when members volunteer their time freely. That is how it should remain.

RCT DEMONSTRATION Composition Task - Introductory and Closing Paragraphs

Paragraph One (an introduction)

In Paragraph One your objective is to start your composition, introduce yourself, identify the topic, issue or problem you are writing about and state your opinion.

(Sample of Paragraph One)

Dear Principal,

In my opinion, your proposal to require each student, such as myself, to participate in a school club, team or project is not workable. The intentions behind the idea are commendable, but the plan as it stands now just will not help raise school spirit. Allow me to explain why:

Paragraph Four (the conclusion)

In Paragraph Four your objective is to conclude your composition by summarizing your main reasons and providing a closing statement. For example:

(Sample Closing Paragraph)

In conclusion, I support your effort to raise the level of our school spirit. However, it is unlikely that your plan will work for the reasons that it is forced on students and many of them have after-school obligations. Thank you for listening to my opinion.

Sincerely,

Joe Studier, Student

(Close out your letter with a closing and a signature)

Every persuasive essay or composition must have an introductory and a closing paragraph.

RCT DEMONSTRATION Composition Task - Sample Composition

(Letter to Principal regarding the School Activity Policy)

Dear Principal,

In my opinion, vour proposal to require each student to participate in a school club, team or project is not workable. The intentions behind the idea are commendable, but the plan as it stands now just will not help raise the school spirit. Allow me to explain why.

First of all, I feel strongly that the plan will fail because students will view this as something that is "forced" on them by the school. Students, like other people, object to having new demands placed on them for reasons that are questionable. Requiring everyone to be on a club or team would mean that these new members would be joining under pressure. This would result in poor performance by the clubs and teams or school projects involved because some of their members were only half-interested in the activity to begin with. Clubs and teams function best when members volunteer their times freely. That is how it should remain.

My second reason for opposing your plan is that it would require a considerable amount of after-school time on the part of students. This in effect would interfere with after-school obligations that many students have. Many of my fellow classmates have to work, babysit for younger brothers and sisters, and complete considerable amounts of homework. For example, my friend Stephen has to babysit for his two little sisters while his Mom and Dad work. His sisters would be coming home to an empty house if Stephen had to stay after school because he was forced to join some school club.

In conclusion, I support your effort to raise the level of our school spirit. However, it is not likely that your plan will work for the reason that it is forced on students and many of them have after-school obligations. Thank you for listening to my opinion.

Sincerely,

Joe Studier, Student

RCT Composition - Practice Assignment #1

(Commentary on the Newly Proposed Anti-Drunk Driving Law)

Situation:

The State Legislature of New York has just passed a "get tough" law against teenage drunk driving as an attempt to reduce the number of teenage deaths caused by mixing driving and drinking. The new law carries a sentence of 6 months in jail for the first offense of driving while intoxicated (DWI). This law will be enforced regardless of whether or not there is an accident, and without regard to the age of the offender or that person's driving record.

Your Task:

Write a composition of about 200 words either supporting or opposing the new law. Either position is acceptable, but you must clearly state your opinion and back it up with reasons and with examples, where appropriate.

Include in your composition:

- a clearly stated opinion
- two reasons supporting your opinion
- two examples or explanations for each reason

Sample Composition for Assignment #1

(Commentary On The Proposed New Drunk Driving Law)

By Henry Munshaw

In my opinion, the new law passed by New York State dealing with drunk drivers is a good one. This law, which requires a six-month jail sentence for violators will be of great benefit to our state for several reasons. Among them are the following:

My first reason supporting this new law is that many lives will be saved in New York because it will deter people from driving while intoxicated. When a drunk driver gets behind a wheel, everyone is at risk. It does not matter if the driver is 16 or 86; a drunk driver has less control of the car and is a clear and present danger to other drivers and pedestrians. Besides saving lives, this law will prevent needless injuries and accidents. There are many victims of drunk driving living today who are maimed and permanently crippled due to the thoughtless behavior of a person who drank too much and then felt free to drive.

Another important reason for enactment of this law is that it sets standards throughout the state. The mandatory features of this law will protect residents regardless of the community they live in because the jail sentence is mandatory. No longer will it be left to the discretion of individual jurists as to whether or not, or how long an offender must serve, in jail. This feature brings fairness and equal protection to all under the law.

In conclusion, I fully agree with this new law by the New York State Legislature. Citizens of our state will be safer; many people will think twice before driving and drinking; and justice will be assured for all. I commend our lawmakers for wisely passing this law.

RCT Composition - Practice Assignment #2

(Writing a Persuasive Letter Regarding School Smoking Policy)

Directions:

Using a standard business letter format, respond with a letter to the request for opinions made by the Principal of Westmont High School.

The Situation:

At Westmont High School, in Freebake, New Jersey, there is a persistent problem in that many of the students come late for class because they smoke cigarettes between classes. Teachers are very upset because so many of the students are late to class for this reason. The Principal, Mr. Hearally, has responded openly by requesting the opinions of all students regarding a plan put forth by the writing teacher, Mr. Bernard Raxton.

Mr. Raxton's Plan

To help eliminate the problem of lateness due to smoking between classes, Mr. Raxton is suggesting that 3 minutes be added between class periods, except for lunch, so students could smoke. This would mean an additional 15 minutes of in-school time, and school would officially end at 2:45 instead of 2:30. Bernard Raxton argues that this would eliminate lateness and avoid students' receiving lower marks for that reason.

YOUR TASK: Respond to Mr. Raxton's plan by writing a letter of about 200 words to the Principal, Mr. Hearally, expressing your opinion on this important subject. In your letter include 2 reasons why you support or oppose the plan. Fully explain each of your reasons with two examples or supporting statements.

Address the letter to: Mr. Joe Hearally, Principal
Westmont High School
735 West Oakley Ave.
Freebake, New Jersey 39540

In Your Letter be Sure to:

-fully explain your opinion (for or against Mr. Raxton's plan)
-include at least two major reasons, with supporting explanations and information for each
-use a standard business letter format and your home address as the return address.

Sample Composition for Assignment #2

(Student Commentary Regarding Raxton Smoking Plan)

44 Treadmill St.
Iconia, NJ 34994

July 14, 19__

Mr. Joe Hearally, Principal
Westmont High School
735 West Oakley Ave.
Freebake, New Jersey 39540

Dear Mr. Hearally,

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Andrew Sambooka and I am responding to your request for ideas about Mr. Raxton's smoking plan for Westmont High School. This is the plan to add 15 minutes to the school day to allow for smoke breaks. I oppose this for the reasons given in this letter.

First, the plan to add a smoke break for students between periods and then have everyone make up the time at the end of the day is unfair to the people who do not smoke. I don't smoke but will be forced to attend school for 15 additional minutes each day because other people need their cigarettes and so come late to class. No one forced cigarettes on these student smokers, so if coming to class on time is hard for them, it is their problem. Why should many non-smoking students be penalized for the bad habits of a few?

Please consider also that school will officially end at 2:45 instead of 2:30. This will cause problems for students who work after school or belong to school teams or clubs. For example, my friend Juan, who works at Burger Delight, has to be at work at 2:45 every day after school because that is the busy time. If Juan has to stay in school until 2:45 each day, he may lose his job or have to take a cut in pay. For people on teams, the plan means 15 minutes less time to practice. Therefore other schools will have an advantage over us in competitions.

In summary, Mr. Raxton's plan is unfair to non-smoking students and, if enacted, will cause hardship for people with after-school obligations. Thank you for for receiving my opinion. I hope you can come up with a better solution to this serious problem at Westmont.

Sincerely,

Andrew Sambooka, Student
Westmont H.S.

RCT Composition - Practice Assignment #3

Writing A Persuasive Letter to a Beginning Smoker

Situation:

You have noticed that your twelve-year-old neighbor, Joey C_____ has just started smoking cigarettes. Joey's mother approaches you and asks you if you would please write a letter to Joey persuading him not to smoke. This youngster looks up to you, which his mother realizes. The purpose of this letter is try to convince young Joe NOT to smoke, before he really gets hooked.

Your task:

Write a persuasive letter of about 200 words to Joey, giving him convincing reasons why he should not smoke. Provide two major reasons, and back them up with examples and other supporting statements.

Include In Your Composition:

- a clearly stated opinion
- two reasons supporting your opinion
- at least two examples or explanations for each reason

Sample Composition for Assignment #3

Letter to a Young Smoker Offering Advice

July 23, 1987

Dear Joey,

I am writing to you about the dangerous smoking habit you just started. As your friend and neighbor, I write you this letter with the hope that I can help. Please listen to my advice, Joe, before you really get hooked. I must convince you that smoking is entirely wrong for you and offer my reasons.

Above all, everyone knows that smoking is harmful to your health and can cause lung cancer. Thousands of people die each year from this disease because they ruined their lungs by smoking. Smoking will also damage your heart and other vital organs, which may lead to a heart attack or other serious illnesses. It will surely bring about shortness of breath which will not only handicap you in the sports you enjoy, but also leave you feeling "run-down."

Secondly, smoking cigarettes will hurt your social life because more and more people are turned off to cigarettes. Smoking makes your breath smell bad; your clothes will also have a bad odor from the stale smoke. With bad breath, girls might tend to avoid you, and that is something I know you do not want to happen. Furthermore, many people resent having to be in a room with a smoker because they have to breathe your second-hand smoke. This is certain to make you unpopular with the people you enjoy being with - all because you smoke.

Therefore, I hope you will take my advice and quit smoking at once. Avoid getting hooked. I know it is hard, but your health and social life will suffer if you continue to smoke.

Sincerely,

Daniel Karey, your concerned friend

RCT Composition - Practice Assignment #4

(Commentary to Community Planning Regarding Vacant Land)

The Situation:

Your Community Planning Board is preparing to vote on a recommendation regarding a proposal to sell city-owned vacant land on Sitwell Avenue, in your neighborhood, for development as a shopping center. Residents who favor the plan say a new supermarket is needed and the taxes that will then be paid will help pay for schools and other services such as police.

This land has been used unofficially as a ball field by neighborhood youngsters for as long as anyone can remember. Except for some small playgrounds and paved school yards, no other similar recreational space is available anywhere nearby.

Your Task:

Decide on whether you agree or disagree with this proposal. Write a composition of about 200 words expressing your opinion that might be submitted to the Board. Explain four reasons why you support or oppose the proposal.

Sample Composition for Assignment #4

(Commentary to Community Planning Board Regarding Vacant Land)

By Rad Stevens

To Members of The Community Planning Board:

Before voting on the plan to allow vacant land on Sitwell Avenue to be developed as a shopping center, please consider my reasons for opposing it. Although it would be more convenient to have a new supermarket in our neighborhood and the additional taxes would help pay for our schools and other municipal services, I believe that the disadvantages outweigh such benefits.

In the first place, depriving our youth of this space leaves them without the only grassy playing field for ball games in the entire neighborhood. This can cause resentment and boredom which may lead to more delinquency than we already have to put up with. Better schools and more police will not help with that problem. Adults can ride to other shopping centers; our youngsters cannot.

Furthermore, keeping this open space helps to maintain a more natural and attractive environment. No increase in tax payments or convenience can match the value of the greenery we now enjoy on Sitwell Avenue because of the vacant land.

These are my reasons for opposing this proposal. Our youth will continue to have a needed playing field and our neighborhood will be protecting its natural environment. You will be serving our community better by voting against this proposal.

RCT Composition - Practice Assignment #5

(Mandatory Drug Testing of Athletes)

The Situation:

The issue of regular mandatory testing of athletes for drug abuse has come up in several recent articles in your school newspaper. Various points of view have been expressed. Questions of personal rights and the fairness of singling out a particular group have been raised.

Your Task:

Write a composition of at least 200 words expressing your point of view on this issue, either for or against such testing. Any position you choose is acceptable, but you must state it clearly and support it with reasons, giving examples where appropriate. Include in your composition:

- a clearly stated opinion
- at least two reasons for the position you have taken with examples and/or explanations
- appropriate introductory and concluding paragraphs

Sample Composition for Assignment #5

(Mandatory Drug Testing of Athletes)

Dear Editor,

All young people who enjoy sports should feel strongly, as I do, that athletes must be tested regularly for drug abuse. The recent scandals involving well-known professionals on major teams have made it clear that the drug abuse problem is so serious that this drastic measure has to be taken.

Although some may believe that this is unfair to athletes because it singles them out as a special group to be treated differently, that is my most important reason for supporting this measure. They are special. Baseball, football, and basketball stars are viewed by the public as heroes. We trust them as role models for our youth. What kind of example do they set if they engage in drug abuse? They have to prove that they are worthy of our trust. When people accept a place in the public eye, they understand that their private lives become public and that they must live by higher standards.

Another reason that I believe in this policy of drug testing is that it will help to protect those sports that we love the most. It is a well-known fact that the public becomes disgusted with sports in which players are found out to be using drugs. This causes a loss of support for teams and eventually a lowered quality of the game. If these athletes know they will be tested regularly, they will not take a chance with drug abuse.

I trust that I have made it clear that there should be no objection to such testing for drugs. Athletes who willingly serve as role models for our youth and who desire to uphold the quality of the sport will agree. They are the only ones who count.

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